

Message Text

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62

ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8063

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L OSLO 1290

EXDIS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR NO IC

SUBJECT: KEFLAVIK: VIEWS OF ICELANDIC FOREIGN MINISTER

1. FOREIGN MINISTER FRYDENLUND BRIEFED ME APRIL 6 ON A CONVERSATION HE HAD WITH ICELANDIC FOREIGN MINISTER EINAR AGUSTSSON DURING THE RECENT NORDIC FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING. WHILE ICELANDIC MINISTER WAS QUITE CLOSE-MOUTHED, HE DID SAY THAT HE HOPED THE U.S. WOULD DELAY ITS RESPONSE TO THE ICELANDIC PROPOSAL FOR THE PHASED CLOSURE OF KEFLAVIK.

2. AGUSTSSON TOLD FRYDENLUND THAT ICELAND'S PRINCIPAL POLITICAL PREOCCUPATION AT THE PRESENT TIME IS THE PREPARATION FOR THE 11TH CENTURY ANNIVERSARY OF THE FOUNDING OF ICELAND WHICH WILL OCCUR IN AUGUST. FRYDENLUND RECEIVED THE IMPRESSION THAT THE COALITION GOVERNMENT IS VERY ANXIOUS TO STAY IN POWER, AT LEAST THROUGH THIS EVENT AND DOES NOT WANT ANY CRISIS. HENCE, THE INTEREST IN POSTPONING THE U.S. RESPONSE. FRYDENLUND ALSO THOUGHT THAT THE SCHEDULED VISIT OF THE NORWEGIAN KING AND HIMSELF IN JUNE WOULD HAVE THE EFFECT OF DELAYING ANY ACTION THAT MIGHT BE CONTEMPLATED ON THE KEFLAVIK ISSUE, IN DEFERENCE TO
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NORWAY'S KNOWN VIEWS ON THIS QUESTION.

3. AGUSTSSON WAS FRANK TO SAY THAT, IF THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSAL TO CLOSE DOWN KEFLAVIK WERE PUT TO VOTE, IT WOULD BE DEFEATED IN THE ALTING. HE REMARKED TO FRYDENLUND THAT HE HOPED THE EVENTUAL U.S. RESPONSE WOULD PROVIDE A GOOD PLATFORM ON WHICH AN OPPOSITION PARTY MIGHT RUN. AGUSTSSON ADDED THAT THE UPCOMING MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS WILL BE WATCHED CLOSELY AS A BAROMETER OF POLITICAL OPINION. BYRNE

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